

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-26. (Canceled)

27. (Previously Presented) An isolated protein comprising the sequence shown in SEQ ID NO: 4.

28. (Previously Presented) An isolated protein consisting of the sequence shown in SEQ ID NO: 4.

29. (Currently Amended) An isolated variant of a protein comprising the amino acid shown in SEQ ID NO:4, wherein the variant comprises an amino acid sequence that is at least 95% identical to SEQ ID NO:4, said variant being capable of increasing stress tolerance of a yeast cell.

30. (Previously Presented) The isolated variant protein of claim 29 wherein the variant comprises an amino acid sequence that is at least 96% identical to SEQ ID NO:4.

31. (Previously Presented) The isolated variant protein of claim 29 wherein the variant comprises an amino acid sequence that is at least 97% identical to SEQ ID NO:4.

32. (Previously Presented) The isolated variant protein of claim 29 wherein the variant comprises an amino acid sequence that is at least 98% identical to SEQ ID NO:4.

33. (Previously Presented) The isolated variant protein of claim 29 wherein the variant comprises an amino acid sequence that is at least 99% identical to SEQ ID NO:4.

34. (Currently Amended) A method of increasing abiotic stress tolerance in yeast comprising transforming yeast with a nucleic acid sequence encoding a protein of claim 27, and expressing [[a]] the protein of claim 27 in said yeast such that said yeast demonstrate increased abiotic stress tolerance as compared with control yeast.

35. (Currently Amended) A method of increasing abiotic stress tolerance in yeast comprising transforming yeast with a nucleic acid sequence encoding a protein of claim 27, and expressing [[a]] the protein of claim 28 in said yeast such that said yeast demonstrate increased abiotic stress tolerance as compared with control yeast.

36. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 34 wherein said abiotic stress is temperature stress.

37. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 35 wherein said abiotic stress is temperature stress.

38. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 34 wherein said abiotic stress is cold temperature stress.

39. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 35 wherein said abiotic stress is cold temperature stress.